

Dando Fuerza a La Familia

Brief Program Description

The Dando Fuerza a La Familia project was developed to reduce the risk factors in children of substance abusing parents (COSAPS) by improving the family environment and the parent's abilities to nurture and provide appropriate learning opportunities for their children. Parents who are substance abusers have substantial parent and family relations problems. To make lasting changes, several elements were necessary for an effective intervention. The intervention was long in duration (14 weeks) and trainer model appropriate responses to the child were provided while coaching the parents in better parenting behavior. The intervention for children taught involved learning prosocial skills. These elements were incorporated into a culturally appropriate curriculum and activities designed in order to maximize an effective intervention.

The three main goals were: 1) to develop a version of the Strengthening Families Program manuals that was culturally, socially, and linguistically appropriate for use with Mexican-American families; 2) to reduce the risk of ATOD use among youth and families; and 3) to proactively identify services that were needed for COSAPS and their families.

Program Strategies

Strategies included: 1) focus groups that were two hours in duration and held monthly for each cohort. Parents provided input for needed changes or program additions; 2) sixteen educational and recreational activities held during the year. These activities gave families insights into the type of resources available in the community that can be used with their children and also provide a meaningful socialization as a family activity; and 3) psycho-educational groups held monthly for a duration of two hours. Parents received presentations on themes such as effective recovery principles, risk and protective factors, boundary setting, stress management, relaxation techniques, interaction with school officials where their children attend, and understanding the psychopathology of substance abuse.

Population Focus

The target population consisted of children of substance abusing parents (COSAPS), male and females, between the ages of 6 and 8 years, with roots in the Mexican-American border communities and with a parent(s) who had undergone a substance abuse treatment episode 12 months prior to entering the program.

Suitable Settings

This intervention is suitable for implementation in a community setting.

Required Resources

The Dando Fuerza a La Familia program procedure manual is required.

Implementation Timeline

Families participate for 14 weeks, once a week for two hours.

Outcomes

Evaluation of this program revealed the following:

- Students in the experimental group significantly increased educational aspirations, school performance, and attendance between pre- and post-test.
- Students in the experimental group significantly increased knowledge of ATOD consequences between pre- and post-test.
- Students in the experimental group significantly improved interaction among peers and reduction of violence driven behavior between pre- and post-test.
- The experimental group showed a significant increase in parent bonding with the child and effective control techniques between pre- and post-test.

Contact Information

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

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